

Sweet Sixteen

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Summary: Lee has to deal the his daughters first date, and Amanda has to deal with Lee when their daughter goes out on her first date.

Sweet Sixteen

"Mom! Mom! Where are you? Mom!" Cassie shouted as she ran in to the back door.

> The kitchen was empty, so she knew her mother was in the study. She was always in
there. She hated that so much because everything was so secret. It had always been that

> way.
 Just as she knocked, Amanda opened the door to the study.
" Sweetheart, I'm in here.

> What's wrong?"
 "Oh, mom! Nothing. Everything is great! You are not going to believe what's

> happened! Well, I guess you could if you really thought about it. I mean, it could happen
 and It did and it happened to me..." Cassie started. Amanda rolled her eyes. How Lee

> had teased her about Cassie's inherited way of getting to the point.
 "Cassandra, Sweetheart. Slow down. What are you talking about?" Amand asked,

> inviting Cassie in to sit down.
 "Mom, He asked me. ME! Zach Bauer asked me out! He is the cutest kid in school.

> He's not the most popular, but he's best friends with the most popular guy so that makes
 him petty close. Oh, Kenzy swore he liked Marianne but he asked me. Oh, Marianne has

> had a crush on him since 7th grade and she was so upset when she found out. She said he
 war crazy for asking me but guess what? He asked me! Me!" Cassie got up, twirled

> around the couch a couple of times, and then tripped over her dad's desk, bringing to her
 mind her father. Her face calmed down, almost sad looking.

> "Cassie, that's great. I'm very happy for you... What's wrong now?" Amanda asked
 as Cassie sat at her father's desk.

> "What about Dad? He's gonna come unglued! Remember how he was when I had my
 first sleep over. I was the only girl there who had to check in every two hours. It was so

> embarrassing." Cassie moped.
 "Your dad is just concerned about you."

> "Yea, but mom, the video camera hidden the tent was a bit much, don't you think?
 Yea, I found it the next morning. Besides, Kenzy swore she saw Dad's car circle the block

> 5 times. He is so afraid to let me do anything. You'd almost think I was on probation and
 Dad was the officer in charge. Could you tell him about the date for me? He will listen to

> you. No one can handle him the way you can,. Please! Here I am, sixteen, and I've never
 been on a date in my life. Kenzy has already had two boyfriends and I really like this guy.

> Please, mom?" Cassie asked, trying very hard to convince her mom to do the "dirty
 deed".

> "Cassie, you know I love you, but you need to do this yourself. I'm sure he will be
 fine." Amanda said. Cassie grimaced and Amanda smiled. She knew Lee would have a

> hard time with his daughter's first date, but once he got used to the idea, he would be fine.

>

> After the dinner dishes were done, Amanda sat down at the table to help little Harry
 with his homework. Cassie was unusually quiet. She had done her biology and was

> rubbing her hands, trying to come up with some way to bring up her concerns with her
 dad. When Lee sat down, Cassie sat herself on his lap, and put her arms around his neck,

> the way she used to do when she was a little girl.
 "How was work, Daddy?" Cassie asked as innocent as she possibly could. Lee looked

> over at Amanda, who buried her face in Harry's homework, suppressing a smile.
 "It was okay... What's gong on? Did something happen that I should know about?"

> Lee asked, looking up at Cassie, then over to Amanda. He was getting that feeling of
 being set up..

> "Everything is just fine, Daddy. I just wanted to know how your day went."
 "You only call me Daddy when you want something or you're in trouble."

> "Well, I'm not in trouble. Actually, it is just the opposite. A guy at school asked me
 out on a date. Isn't that great?" Cassie said, as she quickly got off his lap, and headed to

> the kitchen to get a glass of water. Lee looked up, looking concerned. He looked over at
 Amanda for guidance, and she just smiled and went back to helping Harry.

> "A...A Date? Don't you think you are a little too young for that? I mean, you should
 wait for at least two more years before you start doing anything like that." Lee said,

> getting up and standing by the counter.
 "Dad, I'll be going to college before that. Besides, you said I had to wait til I was

> sixteen two years ago and now I'm 16. We were just going to go to the movies on Friday.
 There is no reason to worry. Oh, Dad. He is a very nice guy. He comes from a great

> family and I just know you will like him. In fact, he reminds me a lot of you." Cassie
 said, quickly going upstairs to end the discussion. Lee looked over at Amanda, Amanda

> shot him an amused look when she saw the stressed look on his face. He turned and went
 to the bottom of the stairs

> "Hey, wait a minute. We're not done yet! Get down here!" Lee yelled up the stairs.
 Cassie slowly came down the stairs.

> "Dad, his name is Zach Bauer. He lives about 5 blocks from here. In fact, he lives on
 Grandma's street. She probably knows him. Please, can I go? It's this Friday and we are

> just going to the movies. I promise I will be home by midnight and there is nothing to
 worry about.. Let me go. I really want to.
Please, Daddy?" Cassie said, as she put her
> arms around Lee's neck.
 Lee sighed in defeat. "I guess so. But I want to meet this guy. No one is about to go
> out with my daughter until I meet him. " Cassie squealed, kissed Lee on the cheek, and
 headed up to her room. "Nothing to worry about,...Yea...right!" Lee looked very
> discouraged and the muscle in his cheek started contracting. Amanda knew he was having
 a hard time with this. Harry, listening the whole time, whispered to his mom, "I don't envy
> Zach."
 Amanda smiled. "Oh, just finish your homework." She got up and went over to Lee.
> "Are you okay?" Amanda asked, putting her arms around her husband. Lee looked at
 her and then back up the stairs. "The boys were so much easier."
>
 The next morning, Amanda sat in the Q-bureau. Ever since they integrated the
> computer with the one at home she only needed to come into the office two days a week.
 That was the arrangement her and Lee came up with when Cassie came along. Lee was so
> excited when he found out they were having a baby. He was adamant about her staying
 out of danger, though. He still carried a few scars from losing both parents when he was
> so young. He was not going to let the same thing happen to his kids. He didn't worry so
 much about Philip or Jamie anymore because they were out on their own now, although
> Jamie comes home during school break.. Amanda was so proud of her children, although
 it seemed she had two different families at times. Jamie was in medical school and he was
> buy all the time. Philip was working as an engineer. He had been married for about one
 year and Stacey, his wife, was wonderful. Harry, 'the surprise', was born four years after
> Cassie. He had his older brothers eating out of his hand.. And then there was Cassie.
 She was the apple of Lee's eye. He was smitten with her the moment he laid eyes on her.
> She had turned into quite a young lady. She was slender like her mom, but she had her
 father's dark blond hair and coloring. But mostly, she had his yen for adventure. That is
> what scared Lee the most. He had grown up around men and he didn't know much about
 young girls. He seemed to do everything wrong when it came to Cassie. He was too
> overprotective. Amanda tried to get him to let up, bit it was fruitless.
 "Amanda... Amanda!" Amanda was startled by Francine, who was standing by her
> desk.
 "Oh, I'm sorry, Francie. I didn't hear you come in. " Amanda said, taking the file
> Francine had in her hand.
 "Don't worry, I wasn't expecting to see you, either.. Here is the file Lee wanted.
> Where is he anyway?" Francine asked, looking around for him.
 "He's being debriefed. What kind of file?" Amanda asked, taking the file from
> Francine.
 "He asked me to check on a Zachary Bauer. Why he is looking into a sixteen year old's
> background, I have no idea. Tell Lee he owes me one for this. He knows the rules for
 using government information for personal use. I'll talk to you later." Francine left the
> room. Amanda opened the file and it said, Zach Bauer. Lee is having Zach checked out!
 Oh my gosh! What is he doing? Just as she was closing the file, Lee walked in.

> Lee bent down and kissed Amanda on the cheek. "Hey, what ya got there?" Lee asked.
 He noticed the upset look on Amanda's face and then he looked down at the file. He

> grabbed the file, went to his desk, looking very guilty.
 "Lee, what are you doing? I can't believe you're checking this boy out." Amanda said,

> getting up from her desk.
 "Francine wasn't supposed to show you that." Lee said, burying his face in the file.

> "Lee, you can't look at that. You have got to trust Cassie. Let her live a little."
 Amanda said.

> "I trust Cassie, I just don't trust this Zach. See...Look at this. Shoplifting. That is
 criminal offence." Amanda grabbed the folder, looked at it, smiled, and then gave it back

> to him.
 "He was eight years old. Lee, just stay out of it." Lee looked inside the folder,

> scrutinizing the information.
 "I can't just stay out of it. She's my baby." Lee said

> "What about Harry?" Amanda asked.
 "That's different."

> "How is that different?"
 "It just is."

> Amanda grabbed the file from Lee. "It's different because Cassie is a girl. Don't deny
 it."

> "Okay, okay. So she's a girl. I can't just sit here while her life could be in danger. I
 have to do something about it."

> Amanda laughed. "She's going on a date! She's not getting mixed up with KGB
 agents. Zach Bauer is not a terrorist, he is a high school student. There is nothing to

> worry about .Please let it go. Don't make things uncomfortable for Cassie."
 "How is protecting my daughter making things bad. We don't even know this boy.

> What if...What if... No, I'm going to make sure Zach Bauer is clean."
 "If Cassie finds out, you are going to regret this. And I won't help you either... I can't

> believe you." Amanda smirked, walked over to Lee and kissed him. He grinned and she
 went back to her desk shaking her head. He can be so amusing.

>

> Lee was sitting in the office trying to concentrate on his case. It was quite boring,
 really. It was almost wrapped up, just a lot of paper work. For some reason, he had a

> difficult time concentrating on it. Visions of Cassie going out on a date seemed to haunt
 him. Boys! He knew what boys were like. Not long ago, he was a boy himself. Visions

> of growing up and the kinds of dates he had surfaced in his memory. If this young man
 was anything like he had been,... well, Lee knew he couldn't let this happen. He couldn't

> interfere but he had to do something. Then it hit him. Why hadn't he thought of it
 before. He's a government agent. He's an expert on spying on people.

> Lee picked up the phone. " Leatherneck. Scarecrow, here. Hey, listen. Can you come
 up here? I want to get a surveillance package going....I need it Friday....well, it's for a

> young lady....No, not the case we're working on, but for something else that has come
 up...Great Leatherneck. I knew I could count on you....Hey, if Billy says anything, send

> him up here, Okay? Great! Oh, one more thing. I wouldn't mention this to
 Amanda...Yep. Mum's the word." Lee hung up the phone. He took a look at the papers

> and, for some strange reason, managed to concentrate this time.

>
 Friday night was here. Cassie was up in her room, making sure

everything was in it's

> place. Amanda walked in. Amanda watched her get ready, feeling very old. It didn't
 seem that long ago when she was primping up little Cassie herself.

> "You look very nice. Um.. Your dad bought you this. He knew this was a special night
 for you. He wanted you to have something special." Amanda said, as she gave Cassie a

> small box. Cassie opened the box, and pulled out a necklace.

"It's beautiful." Cassie said, giving it to her mother. Amanda turned her around and

> secured the clasp.
 "I don't understand him sometimes He was against this from the start." Cassie said,

> admiring the necklace.
 "Don't worry, sometimes I don't understand him myself. It's probably his way of

> apologizing. It's a very pretty necklace, though. I want you to have a great night, okay?"
 Amanda squeezed her hand and smiled at her. Then she left the room.

>

> Lee sat outside on the porch, busy cleaning his guns. Harry sat beside him, knowing
 what was coming and not wanting to miss a minute of it. Lee had five guns, a 12 gage

> shot gun, a 30-06, a 9mm ruger, and two 38's. Lee started cleaning one, but wasn't
 much into it until a young man pulled up to the curb. Then he rigorously started cleaning

> one at a time.
 Zach slowly walked up to the door, not quite sure what was going on. Kenzy Lewis,

> Cassie's best friend, had warned him that Lee Stetson was a very protective father. That's
 why he had waited so long before he finally asked Cassie out.

> Lee looked over Zach as he came to the porch. He looked very sharp. A little too
 sharp, thought Lee.

> "Ah....I'm here to get Cassie." Zach said, standing on the lower step.
 "You much be Zach Bauer. Have a seat. Cassie will be out in a few minutes." Lee said,

> looking down at his gun.
 Zach sat down. He began to fidget with his jacket. He said hi to Harry, but Harry just

> grinned. Zach knew he was in trouble.
 "So, tell me , Zach. Do you shoot?" Lee asked, looking up for a brief second.

> "Um, not really. My mom isn't crazy about guns." Zach said.
 "That's too bad. It's a good sport. Harry here is a very good shot. Almost as good as

> me. But Cassie, she's the best. She can hit anything that moves. But I can still hit the
 farthest distance. Maybe some day you'll see just how far I can shoot,... if you get my

> drift." Zach turned a bright shade of red.
 Just then, the door opened and Cassie and Amanda came out. Cassie looked radiant.

> Lee stood up, and Zach followed.
 "You look....great." Zach said, looking at Lee to make sure he didn't say anything

> wrong.
 "Thanks. We'd better be going." Cassie said. Lee cleared his throat.

> "What movie are you going to see? What time will you be home? Do you have your
 cell phone? Feel free to call us any time. Make sure she's back by midnight, no less. Do I

> make myself clear?" Lee asked. Zach answered the questions and he and Cassie quickly
 left.

> "Did you see the look on his face! You really scared him Dad. Cool!" Harry went
 inside to catch the rest of his favorite TV show. Amanda sat down next to Lee, put her

> arm around his shoulder and cuddled up to him. "You did very well. Even the colonial
 would be proud." Amanda grinned.

> "Hey, lay off, okay? I just want to make sure she is safe." Lee said, leaning into
 Amanda.

> "I'm surprised you don't have someone tailing them." Amanda said.
 "I tried, but it was personal so the Agency said no." Amanda smiled, but Lee didn't.

> That made Amanda smile even more.
 "Well, I guess you're stuck with me tonight. Poor guy."

> "Oh, I'm not stuck." Lee said, as he pulled her legs on his lap. I'm never stuck with
 you." He kissed her and they embraced, as Lee watched the direction the car was leaving.

> Then he waved his hand, just as another car took off.

>
 Later that evening, Lee was sitting in the study, adjusting his ear piece, so it couldn't

> be seen. The Agency had planted a listening device in the necklace that he had given to
 Cassie. He wanted to make sure everything went as smoothly as possible. Amanda came

> in to the study to find Lee sitting at the desk. He was busy looking over some papers and
 was startled when Amanda came in.

> "Sweetheart, what are to doing? You know, we made a deal that we weren't going to
 spend any time in here on the weekends. Is there anything wrong?" Amanda asked,

> sitting on the edge of the desk. They had agreed when the computers were networked that
 weekends were their time and no business at home..

> "I'm just checking on some paperwork that is due on Monday. Why don't you go
 ahead and I'll be in a little while." Lee said, putting something into his pocket. Amanda

> could always tell when he is hiding something. She walked over to kiss him and saw a
 wire hanging out of his ear. She reached into his jacket. Any other time he would have

> welcomed it but this time he grabbed her hand. But he was too late. She pulled the
 listening device out.

> "What is this?" Amanda asked.
 "I'm a...listening to the game." Lee stumbled out.

> "Oh, who's playing? " Amanda asked, noting is inability to look her in the eye.
 "Virginia Tech and UCLA."

> "Ah, Sweetheart, that game is tomorrow. You're going with Jamie, remember?" She
 grabbed the device and disconnected the ear plug. Amanda heard Cassie and Zach were

> busy buying popcorn.
 "Your mom seems very nice. She's very pretty for her age.' Lee smiled at Amanda as

> the two listened to the two.
 "And you were right about your Dad. He was trippin' when I got there. Does he

> always clean his guns before your dates? The man is wacked out.! " Amanda smiled as
 she turned it off

> "I don't believe you!...What is this?... Don't you think you have gone too far. What are
 you, James Bond?...scratch that. " Amanda turned off the device. Lee grabbed it and

> turned it back on.
 "Excuse me." Lee plugged the ear piece back in.

> "Oh my gosh! Would you look at yourself? Lee, this is our daughter. You are spying
 on our daughter. Stop it. She will be fine. If things go bad, she will handle it. She is so

> much like you."
 "That's what scares me the most. What do I know about normal courtship? What do I

> know about anything normal?"
 "You are doing pretty good so far. Don't cut yourself short. Besides, to Cassie,

> everything you do is normal. Don't ruin the trust she has in you. You two have a great
 relationship. You two remind me so much of

me and my father. Trust her, Lee. "

> Lee gave Amanda a hug, turned off the radio, and handed her the device.. She put it in
the drawer. "You always did get a little carried away."

> "Hey, it runs in the family."

>
 11:54 PM. Lee is sitting watching the clock, wishing Amanda had never caught him in

> the Study with the listening device. Where could they be? He checked his cell phone to
make sure I was still working. 11:55. It had been an hour since Jamie checked in. During

> all of his stake outs and being stuck or trapped on Agency business had never been worse
than this night. How he had allowed Cassie to ever go out in the first place was beyond

> him. Well, it would never happen again. He couldn't go through this again.
 Amanda came in with two cups and handed Lee one. He took a sip.

> "Hey, this is cocoa."
 "Yes. The way you have been acting, I figured you were too young for coffee. Besides,

> you need to relax." Amanda said, kissing him on the cheek.
 "I am relaxed. And I want coffee."

> "Sorry, kitchen's closed." Amanda said.
 Carrie came bursting in to the room. She had a look of horror on her face. Lee paled.

> "What happened? What did he do? Where is he? I want to talk to him?" Lee barked,
 going to the door.

> "The 'He 'you are referring to is right in front of me. I'm so angry! How could you,
 Dad! Cleaning the guns was bad enough, but ...really..." She pulled the necklace down

> until it broke, threw it at her dad.
 "Zach was admiring the necklace. His ring got caught and THIS fell out!" Cassie

> handed him a small battery shaped bug. "The company Zach's dad works for makes
 these little things and he told me all about it. Ohhh! I hate you! And once this gets around

> at school, I'll never get another date. Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you? I'm not your
 little girl anymore. I'm sixteen Why don't you let me grow up? If you had your way, I

> would still be wearing pink bows and playing with Barbies. Thanks a lot, Dad! Just stay
 out of my business!" Cassie screamed, and ran up the stairs.

> Amanda went over and put her arm on Lee. His face looked drained. He sat down on
 the couch and put his head in his hands. Cassie had never told her father that she hated

> him. They have always had a very good relationship.
 "Well, I guess you were right. I guess I went a little too far. What am I going to do

> now?" Lee asked
 "Well, sweetheart, give her time. You know she didn't mean it. She needs time to cool

> off. Why don't you head to bed. I'll be right up."Amanda said.
 "No, I think I'll take a walk. I need to think...clear my head. I love you." With that,

> Lee kissed his wife and headed out the door. Amanda took the cups to the kitchen sink,
 and poured another one. She took it up the stairs and gave it to Cassie.

> Cassie was lying on her bed, crying. Amanda sat down, put her arm on her back, and
 Cassie sat up and fell into her arms.

> "Oh, mom. I was so embarrassed. Zach will probably never ask me out again. I'm
 probably the only girl in school who was bugged by her own father. Why does Dad have

> to be so pigheaded?" Cassie's tear streaked face .
 "Try not to worry about that now, We'll deal with that in the morning. So, tell me how

> your date went? Did you have a good time?" Amanda asked, drying her tears. She would
 save the heavy discussion until both Cassie and Lee had time to think.

> "Oh, mom. It was really nice. We saw a very dumb movie, though. Remind me to
 take Harry sometime. He would love it. Then we took a walk at the Lincoln Memorial.

> Did you know that it is a very romantic place at night?" Cassie said, sitting up, taking a
 sip of her cocoa.

> "Yea, I heard it was quite beautiful." Amanda smiled, memories of nights with Lee at
 that very same spot flooding her mind.

> "We stopped for ice cream and then he brought me back here. And I saw Jamie at the
 Ice cream Parlor. He was there with Renee...Did Dad put him up to that? Jamie isn't

> spying for dad, is he? " Cassie demanded to know.
 "I don't think Jamie would do it, but I'll find out." Amanda said

> "He didn't kiss me, if that's what you're worried about. I guess maybe the bug scared
 him off He seemed very quiet on the way back from getting Ice cream. He will probably

> never speak to me again."
 "Well, you drink your cocoa and we will talk in the morning. Don't worry too much,

> okay?. Tomorrow everything will seem more clear, I promise. I love you, Sweetheart ."
 Amanda kissed her on the cheek and left the room.

>

> Lee quietly walked in the room, trying not to wake Amanda. She sat up when he closed
 the door. Lee turned around and noticed that she wasn't asleep at all. In fact, he could

> tell she had something on her mind.]
 "Hi. How was your walk?" Amanda asked, as Lee got undressed.

> "Terrible. Did you know most people water their grass at night?."
 "Tell me you didn't do it?"

> "Do what?"
 "Tell me you didn't enlist Jamie to help you out with your little scheme."

> 'Okay, I didn't"
 "Is that the truth?"

> " I gave you the answer you wanted to hear, didn't I? "
 "Is it the truth?" Amanda asked crossly.

> "Look, I mentioned it to him. How was I to know he was going to show up for Ice
 cream. " Lee said, getting into bed.

> " How did you know he got ice cream?" Amanda asked. Lee looked at her for a few
 seconds, knowing he was caught.

> "What else are you not telling me? Was Philip in on this too?"
 "Well, Philip wanted to see that same movie. What did it matter if they went at the

> same time. Philip and Tracey don't get out enough, you know that I was actually helping
 them out..."

> "But you didn't know what movie they were seeing until Zach showed up."
 "Oh, yea...Well...I...ah...forgot about that..." Lee stammered. Amanda stared at Lee.

> By the look she was giving him, Lee knew he was in trouble. Amanda's face became red
 and she slipped out of bed, putting her robe on.

> "I don't believe you! First, you make a big deal about her even going out. Not to
 mention the file you had on poor Zach. And then the scene you created with the guns Oh,

> yea. Harry told me all about that one . I thought it was cute , at first. But then the
 necklace. I just can't believe that one. And now you got Cassie's brothers spying on her!

> What, is the Agency not keeping you busy enough? What other surprises do you have up
 your sleeve? All of this because you can't handle the fact that your daughter is growing

> up! What happens when she goes to college? Are you going to put in agents as her
 teachers? Maybe Francine can be her room mate. Why not move into the room across

> form her's. That way you can bug her room and keep her under 24 hour surveillance!"
 Amanda yelled.

> "Hey, now that's ridiculous. Francine's too young to go to college." Lee said, trying to
 make light of the situation.

> "This is not funny. You are getting way out of control! Cassie is not one of your
 suspects! She is your daughter! Someone, up til tonight, trusted you more than anyone

> else. " Amanda said, grabbing her pillow. "And to be quite honest, I'm not so sure about
 you myself. Good night. I'll see you in the morning!" Amanda said, closing the bedroom door on her way out. Lee picked up his pillow, punched it two or three times.
 "@*%&\$%&^%" Lee said, burying his head under the pillow.

>

> When Cassie came down for breakfast, she noticed a single pink rose on the kitchen
 table. She turned around so see if anyone was there, and noticed her dad with another one

> in his hand.
 "Hi, there. Um,...this is for you. " Lee said, giving her the rose. Cassie looked at it,

> trying to remind herself that she was furious with her father.
 "Thanks."

> "Cassie, we need to talk. Come one, Let's go for a walk."
 "What, is Jamie out in the bushes?" Cassie asked, sarcastically. Lee just looked at her,

> and then grabbed her hand.
 "Come on." Cassie agreed and Lee and his daughter went outside. Amanda peeked

> around the corner and watched as the two of them as they walked out the door, with a
 smile on her face. She knew things were going to be just fine.

>

>
 Lee had not slept well that night. Of course, after 17 years of sleeping with someone,

> it's kind of difficult to sleep alone. And he knew if he didn't get this situation cleared up,
 tonight would be another LONG lonely night. Besides, this whole thing with Cassie was

> killing him. He hated the fact that he had blown things with Cassie. And there was
 something to this hero worship of hers. But mostly, the thought that she actually hated

> him was tearing him up inside.
 "Look, I know you probably hate me right about now. I know I got a little carried

> away." Lee said.
 "A little, dad?" Cassie asked. Lee sighed and tilted his head to the side. "Okay, a lot

> carried away. I'm sorry. The last thing I wanted was for you to get hurt, I guess this is
 how the whole thing started in the first place. I just love you so much that I'm not quite

> ready for you to grow up. You and Harry have given me something that I guess I've
 always wanted deep inside. You've given me the chance to be involved in a normal

> childhood, one that I sorely missed growing up. I missed most of Philip and Jamie's. I
 don't love them any less, I just want to keep a good thing going." Lee said, hoping he

> was making since.
 "Dad, time doesn't stand still. I am going to grow up. Harassing my dates isn't going to

> change that. " Cassie said
 "Tell me about it. Okay, I promise I will back off....try to back off. Just trying to be

> honest. And if your mom gets any say, she'll keep me to my word." Lee said, looking
 over at Cassie. Cassie smiled.

> "Well, I guess that's all I can hope for." Cassie gave Lee a hug
"Now, what's with
 you and mom? She slept in Jamie's room last
night. What's up?"
> "Nothing a little flower can't fix.." Lee put his arm around his
daughter and the two of
 them started for home.
>

>
 Amanda walked into her room with a basket of laundry. The game
would be starting
> soon and she had not talked to Lee all day. She felt guilty about
how the night had gone,
 and she really wanted to see him before
he left with Jamie. Lying on the bed was one pink
> rose bud. She picked it up, smelled it. From behind, Lee puts his
arms around her waist,
 drawing her close. She dropped the basket.

> "Can you ever forgive an old fool?" Lee whispered in her ear.
Amanda smiled and
 turned around. "If I knew an old fool, I
might." She said. He nuzzled her neck.
> "I sure missed you last night It was awfully lonely without you.
And before you say it, I
 know. I deserved it. And you'll be happy
to know that Cassie and I had a little talk. I
> think things are going to be okay. " Lee said.
 "They are, huh?
" Amanda asked
> "You bet."
 "That's right, because you are going to apologize to
Zach as well." Amanda said.
> "What?.... Amanda, I don't think....What good will it" Lee
stammered. Amanda just
 smiled at him and he laughed, resigned
himself and kissed her. "Oh, the things I do for
> you, Mrs. Stetson!" Amanda laughed and they kissed again.

>

> It was Saturday night, and Cassie waited at the door for Zach.
Amanda and Cassie had
 a plan in motion. Amanda had called and
talked to Zach's mom and explained about what
> had happened the night before. Hopefully, tonight would go better
than last night.
 Amanda sat at the kitchen table with Lee,
Philip, Jamie, and Harry. Cassie walked back
> to the kitchen table.
 "Mom, I'm not sure if this is going to
work?" Cassie looked a little nervous.
> "Cassie, Sweetheart. It'll be fine. I talked to his mother this
afternoon. He will be here
 any minute. Try to sit down." Amanda
said, looking back at the men at the table.
> The bell rang and Cassie went to the door. Zach stood there, not
sure what to expect.
 "Hey, Cassie. My mom said you called and
needed to talk to me. What's up?" Zach
> asked, looking around to see if Lee was there.
 "Yea, come in. "
Cassie closed the door and Zach followed here into the kitchen. He

> saw Lee and the other men sitting at the table. He took a step back
and Amanda got up.
 "Zach, please have a seat. There is something
that we need to talk about." Amanda
> said. The color drained form Zach's face. "Don't worry, this isn't
a set up. Go ahead and
 have a seat."
> Zach sat at the table and Amanda glared at Lee. If anyone else were
to be making him
 do this, he would be out the door in a flash.
But this was Amanda. How could one person
> have such a hold over him? Lee cleared his throat.
 "Um,
ah...Zach. I need to...ah... apologize....about last night. I ,
ah...think we might
> have gotten off on the wrong foot..." He looked over at Amanda, who
urged him to
 continue.
> "Yea, and, ah...about that bug thing....Nothing personal. It's

just, she's my only
daughter..and , well,... you know,... I'm sorry." He looked over at Amanda. She smiled
> and he looked back at Zach.
Amanda cleared her throat and looked at Jamie.
> "And I'm sorry about the ice cream parlor. I was following you "
Jamie said. Amanda
looked at Philip.
> "And I'm sorry for the movie theater, too." Philip said.
"What about the movie theater?" Cassie asked.
> "We'll talk about that later, Sweetheart." Amanda said. Cassie and Zach looked at each
other
> "See what I live with?" Cassie asked, Zach. "I know you would probably like to crawl
under a rock by now, I know I would, but if you'd like to try it again tonight, I'm
> game....Your mom DID say you had no plans. And I promise to leave the family at home
this time."
> "Yea, I'll keep them busy." Amanda said, looking over the table filled with a bunch of
cheap labor.
> "Well, I guess it wouldn't hurt." Zach said.
"Great! I'll go get my jacket." Cassie ran in the other room. Zach got up and walked

> over to Amanda.
"Thanks." Zach said.
> "No problem. You two have fun. " Zach and Cassie left. Amanda turned around.
"Okay, guys. What am I going to do with all of you? "
> "Well, Stacey is expecting me home soon". Philip said.
"And Dad wanted me to stop by this weekend to go over expenses." Jamie said, getting
up.
"Hold it! No one goes anywhere! I've talked to Stacey and your Dad and they say you
are mine for the rest of the evening. Now, Cassie and I have talked. She wants her room
painted a pale yellow. The paint and brushes are in her room waiting for you. If you start
now, you should have it done before she gets home. Get busy."
Amanda ordered.
"But mom, I didn't do anything!" Harry said.
Amanda thought about that. He didn't
do anything. "You're right. Your Grandma has invited you over for the night. Go get
packed."
> Philip and Jamie grudgingly got up and headed upstairs. Lee got up and walked over to
Amanda.
> "I don't suppose I could get out of this, could I?" Lee asked, flashing one of those
famous smiles.
> "Oh, no, Stetson. In fact, when you're done, I get you." Amanda said, pointing
upstairs.
> "Now that sounds promising."
"Not if you don't get busy, it won't be. By the way, " Amanda came over and put her
arms in Lee's shirt to make sure there were no listening devices.
"I just wanted to make
sure it didn't happen again." She started to back up but Lee grabbed her hands.
> "You can do that any time." And he kissed her hands.
"Oh no you don't, Stetson. Not til Cassie's room is a pale yellow!" Amanda said,
> pushing Lee up the stairs. Oh, her family of spies!

End
file.